

# Summary

## Contents

### CONTENTS



#### **Feature Articles**

**NEW THIS MONTH** - Trends in Federal Voter Turnout and Informal Voting in South Australia  
Voter turnout in the 2010 federal election in SA lower than four previous elections, with proportionally fewer South Australians who were enrolled to vote, choosing to vote.



#### **Demography**

Includes: **Estimated resident population, Components of population change**

The Statistical Division of Outer Adelaide records the states largest rate of ERP growth (2.0%) in the year to 30 June 2010.



#### **Labour Force**

Includes: **Contents, Employed persons, Unemployment, Participation rate**

SA's trend participation rate for males up slightly to 69.9% while the rate for females remained unchanged at 57.6% in April 2011.



#### **Incomes**

Includes: **Average weekly earnings**

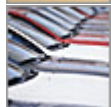
In February 2011, females working full-time in SA earn on average, 15.1% less than their male counterparts.



#### **State Accounts**

Includes: **State accounts, Household final consumption expenditure (HFCE)**

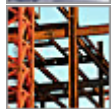
SA's State Final Demand increased 0.6% between the September and December quarters 2010.



#### **Consumption**

Includes: **Retail trade, New motor vehicle sales**

SA's retail turnover estimate rose 0.3% in March 2011.



#### **Investment**

Includes: **Private new capital expenditure, Mineral and petroleum exploration expenditure**

SA's chain volume estimate of private new capital expenditure rose 6.4% in March quarter 2011.



#### **Construction**

Includes: **Building approvals, Construction work done**

SA dwelling unit approvals estimate in March 2011 rose (1.8%) for the first time in 12 months.



#### **Price Indexes**

Includes: **Contents, Consumer price index, Wage price index, House price index**

Education was the largest contributor to Adelaide's March 2011 consumer price index rise.



#### **Housing Finance**

Includes: **Housing finance commitments**

SA's average home loan value for first home buyers 4.3% higher than for non-first home buyers in March 2011.



#### **International Merchandise Trade**

Includes: **Exports and Imports**

Wheat and Copper account for more than a quarter of SA's total exports in March 2011.



#### **Water**

Includes: **Rainfall, Reservoir levels**

Adelaide's reservoir levels for the end of April 2011 remain considerably higher than at the same time in recent years.

## In this issue

### NOTES

### FORTHCOMING ISSUES

#### ISSUE

June 2011

#### Release Date

28 June 2011

### WHAT'S NEW THIS MONTH

This month's **SA Stats** presents a feature article that examines the measures of federal voter turnout and informal voting by state, before focusing more closely on South Australia and its eleven Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (CED). These measures were compared against the marginal cohorts of age, educational attainment and English proficiency to ascertain any relationship present in the recent 2010 federal election. The article combines published data from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and ABS 2006 Census data.

Other Explanatory Notes are not included in SA Stats in the form found in other ABS publications. Readers are directed to the Explanatory Notes contained in related ABS publications referenced in the feature article.

Topics which have been updated with new data in this month's issue of **SA Stats** include: Construction; Consumption; Housing Finance; Incomes; International Merchandise Trade; Investment; Labour Force; Price Indexes; and Water.

### NOTE: CHANGE TO ABS PRODUCT

The final release of the current SA Stats product will be 28 June, 2011. Currently the ABS is developing a new national output - State and Territory Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1367.0), anticipated release in July 2011. This product will provide an overview of the population, economy and environment for each of the Australian states and territories.

### INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Loucas Harous on Adelaide (08) 8237 7585, or email [sa.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:sa.statistics@abs.gov.au).

## Feature Articles



## FEATURE ARTICLES

### 2011

- May 2011 Trends in Federal Voter Turnout and Informal Voting in South Australia
- Apr 2011 South Australia's Changing Industrial Landscape
- Mar 2011 Patterns in South Australian Retail Turnover  
Emotional Well-being in South Australia
- Feb 2011 Young People, Sports and Physical Recreation in South Australia
- Jan 2011 Household Water Consumption and Conservation Actions

### 2010

- Dec 2010 Women in South Australia's workforce
- Nov 2010 National Regional Profile: Regional data made easy!
- Oct 2010 Making better use of Public Sector information
- Sep 2010 Where have all the male teachers gone?
- Aug 2010 Beefing up our economy: Meat production in South Australia
- Jul 2010 Children's Use of the Internet and Mobile Phones in South Australia
- Jun 2010 International Students and the VET sector in South Australia
- May 2010 Interstate Departures from South Australia
- Apr 2010 Engineering Construction in South Australia
- Mar 2010 Burial and cremation trends in South Australia
- Feb 2010 The new Australian Statistical Geography Standard
- Jan 2010 Houses in South Australia: The cost of building a dream

### 2009

- Dec 2009 International Students in South Australia
- Nov 2009 Perceptions of Crime and Safety in South Australia
- Oct 2009 Who's Not in the Labour Force?
- Sep 2009 One parent families with dependent children in South Australia
- Aug 2009 Heating and Cooling
- Jul 2009 What are South Australians Studying?
- Jun 2009 Water Efficiency in South Australia's Vineyards
- May 2009 Journey to Work in the City of Adelaide
- Apr 2009 Housing Finance - First Home Buyers and Other Borrowers
- Feb 2009 Recent Increases in South Australia's Fertility
- Jan 2009 South Australian Household Final Consumption Expenditure

### 2008

- Dec 2008 Energy Consumption in South Australia
- Nov 2008 Adelaide's Population Turnover
- Oct 2008 Contributors to Adelaide's Price Rises
- Sep 2008 Adelaide's Suburbs of Advantage and Disadvantage
- Aug 2008 South Australia's Agriculture Industry
- July 2008 New Dwelling Approvals in South Australia
- May 2008 Literacy of South Australians
- April 2008 South Australia's Migrant Population  
South Australia's Ageing Population and the Labour Force
- Feb 2008 South Australia's Mining Industry  
Water Supply in South Australia
- Jan 2008 Labour Force Underutilisation and the Underemployed in South Australia  
Water Use in Agriculture - A South Australian Perspective

### 2007

- Nov 2007 Sports Attendance in South Australia  
Recorded Crime - Victims, South Australia, 2006

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Oct 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Attendance at Cultural Venues and Events by South Australians</u></a>                            |
| Aug 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities - South Australia, 2006</u></a>      |
| Jul 2007    | <a href="#"><u>South Australia's big picture: Census highlights the changes in South Australian society</u></a> |
|             | <a href="#"><u>Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation Activities - South Australia</u></a>             |
| May 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Health of South Australians - Body Mass</u></a>  |
|             | <a href="#"><u>Household Use of the Internet in South Australia</u></a>   |
| Apr 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Employment in the Retail Trade Industry in South Australia</u></a>                               |
|             | <a href="#"><u>River Murray - South Australia</u></a>   |
| Mar 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Household Waste Management in South Australia</u></a>  |
| Feb 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Births - South Australia</u></a>   |
| Jan 2007    | <a href="#"><u>Gross Domestic Product and Gross State Product</u></a>   |
| <b>2006</b> |   |
| Dec 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Rainfall in South Australia, South Australian Reservoirs, Water Consumption</u></a>              |
| Nov 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Health of South Australians - Health related actions</u></a>                                     |
| Oct 2006    | <a href="#"><u>National Regional Profile - New Release, New Features</u></a>                                    |
| Sep 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Fuel Production and Consumption, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Land Use Change and Forestry</u></a>  |
| Aug 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Health of South Australians - Health Risk Behaviours</u></a>                                     |
|             | <a href="#"><u>The South Australian Grape Industry</u></a>  |
| Jul 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Use of IT By Australian Businesses</u></a>   |
|             | <a href="#"><u>Household use of the Internet in South Australia</u></a>   |
| May 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Health of South Australians - Health Status</u></a>  |
| Apr 2006    | <a href="#"><u>International Trade in Services</u></a>  |
|             | <a href="#"><u>International Students in South Australia</u></a>  |
| Feb 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Labour Force and Other Characteristics of Migrants in South Australia</u></a>                    |
| Jan 2006    | <a href="#"><u>Survey of work in selected Culture &amp; Leisure Activities</u></a>                              |
| <b>2005</b> |   |
| Nov 2005    | <a href="#"><u>Household Income in South Australia</u></a>  |
|             | <a href="#"><u>Household Expenditure in South Australia</u></a>   |
| Oct 2005    | <a href="#"><u>SA Business and Innovation</u></a>   |
|             | <a href="#"><u>Recent History of Population change in South Australia, 1993-94 to 2003-04</u></a>               |
| Aug 2005    | <a href="#"><u>Average Weekly Earnings</u></a>  |
|             | <a href="#"><u>Transition from School</u></a>   |

## Demography



### DEMOGRAPHY

#### ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION

The estimated resident population (ERP) for South Australia was 1,647,800 at 30 September 2010, an increase of about 17,400 persons (1.1%) since 30 September 2009. This was the second slowest growth of all the states and territories behind Tasmania (0.8%). Nationally, the ERP was 22,407,700 at 30 September 2010, an increase of about 345,500 persons (1.6%) since 30 September 2009.

#### ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION, Preliminary data

|                              | Population at end September quarter<br>2010<br>'000 | Change over previous<br>year<br>'000 | Change over previous<br>year<br>% |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| New South Wales              | 7 253.4   | 95.2                                 | 1.3                               |
| Victoria                     | 5 567.1   | 90.5                                 | 1.7                               |
| Queensland                   | 4 532.3   | 82.2                                 | 1.8                               |
| South Australia              | 1 647.8   | 17.4                                 | 1.1                               |
| Western Australia            | 2 306.2   | 47.3                                 | 2.1                               |
| Tasmania                     | 508.5   | 4.1                                  | 0.8                               |
| Northern Territory           | 230.2   | 2.9                                  | 1.3                               |
| Australian Capital Territory | 359.7   | 6.0                                  | 1.7                               |
| <b>Australia(a)</b>          | <b>22 407.7</b>                                     | <b>345.5</b>                         | <b>1.6</b>                        |

(a) Includes Other Territories comprising Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.  
Source: Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0).

In 2009-10, the Statistical Division (SD) of Outer Adelaide showed the largest ERP growth in South Australia (2.0%), increasing from a population of 136,700 at 30 June 2009 to an estimated 139,500 at 30 June 2010. The next largest percentage growth occurred in the SD of Adelaide (1.3%), increasing from a population of 1,188,100 to an estimated 1,203,200 over the same period.

### Estimated Resident Population(a), by Statistical Division - South Australia

|                       | 2009                             |                                   | 2010                             |                                   |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                       | Population at 30<br>June<br>'000 | Change over previous<br>year<br>% | Population at 30<br>June<br>'000 | Change over previous<br>year<br>% |
| Adelaide              | 1 188.1                          | 1.3                               | 1 203.2                          | 1.3                               |
| Outer Adelaide        | 136.7                            | 1.9                               | 139.5                            | 2.0                               |
| Yorke and Lower North | 47.1                             | 1.4                               | 47.6                             | 1.1                               |
| Murray Lands          | 70.5                             | 0.4                               | 70.7                             | 0.3                               |
| South East            | 66.0                             | 0.9                               | 66.7                             | 1.1                               |
| Eyre                  | 35.6                             | 1.1                               | 35.9                             | 0.9                               |
| Northern              | 80.5                             | 0.5                               | 81.0                             | 0.6                               |
| South Australia       | 1 624.5                          | 1.3                               | 1 644.6                          | 1.2                               |

(a) Estimates for 2009 are revised to align with new 2009 state and territory totals and estimates for 2010 are preliminary.

Source: Regional Population Growth, Australia (cat. no. 3218.0)

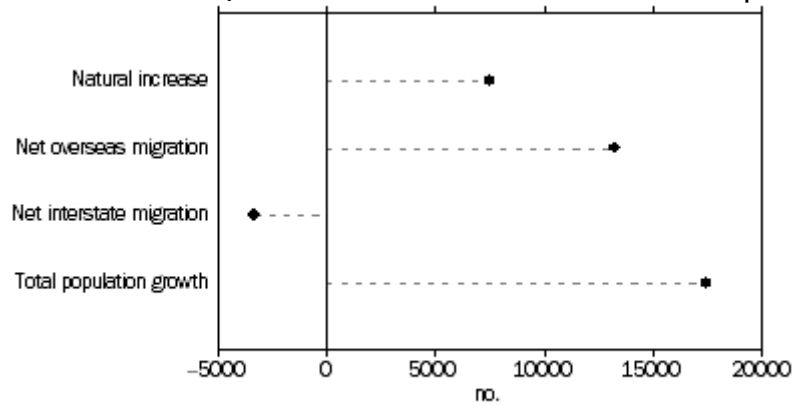
### Map of South Australia's Statistical Divisions (PDF 3.083MB)

## COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

For the year ended 30 September 2010, South Australia recorded a natural increase (i.e. the net of births and deaths) of 7,499 persons. Net overseas migration provided a gain of 13,243 persons in the same period while net interstate migration realised a loss of 3,307 persons.

For the year ended 30 September 2010, Australia recorded a natural increase in population of 159,752 persons; net overseas migration resulted in a gain of 185,772 people.

## POPULATION GROWTH, South Australia - Year ended 30 September 2010



Source: Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0)

## Labour Force



### LABOUR FORCE

#### CONTENTS

[Employed persons](#)

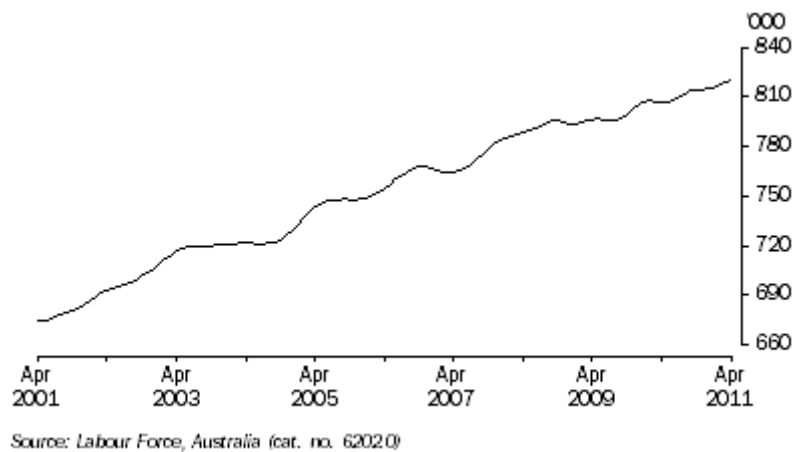
[Unemployment](#)

[Participation rate](#)

#### EMPLOYED PERSONS

The April 2011 estimate of the total number of persons employed in South Australia (in trend terms) has risen to 820,300, up from 818,700 the previous month. The April estimate is 1.7% above the estimate recorded in April 2010 (806,400). Nationally, a total of 11,446,100 persons were employed in April 2011; 2.5% higher than the corresponding month of the previous year (11,166,100).

#### EMPLOYED PERSONS, Trend - South Australia

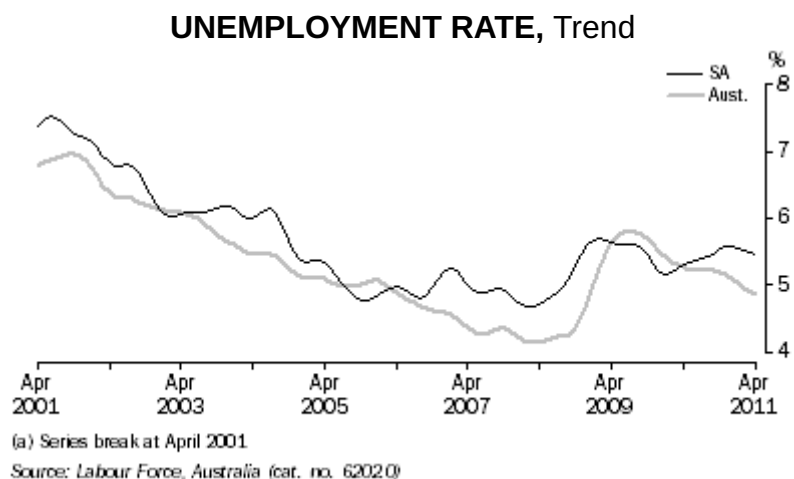


In South Australia, the trend estimate for the number of males employed full-time increased slightly from the previous month (365,000) to 365,800 in April 2011; continuing its upward trend. Looking at the composition of all male employees, those working full-time accounted for 82.8% of the male workforce, up from 81.9% at the same time the previous year.

The number of South Australian females employed full-time fell in April 2011 to 187,200; 1.7% below the peak recorded in October 2010 (190,400). At that time full-time female employees accounted for 50.6% of the female workforce. In April 2011, this proportion was 49.5%.

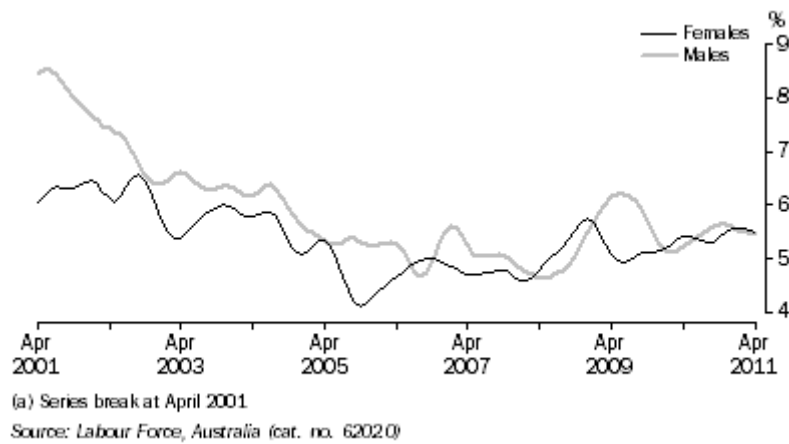
## UNEMPLOYMENT

The trend estimate unemployment rates for both South Australia and Australia remained relatively steady in April 2011 at 5.5% and 4.9% respectively. South Australia's rate has been higher than the national rate since April 2010.



The trend unemployment rates for males and females in South Australia has fluctuated over the last 12 months, and in April 2011 the estimates were 5.4% and 5.5% respectively. Over the same period, the national unemployment rates for males and females have been falling, and in April 2011 were 4.6% and 5.2% respectively.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, Trend - South Australia



## PARTICIPATION RATE

Movement in South Australia's trend estimate participation rate has been relatively flat over recent months, and in April 2011 the estimate was 63.6%. Australia's trend participation rate remains higher than South Australia's rate at 65.7% for April 2011.

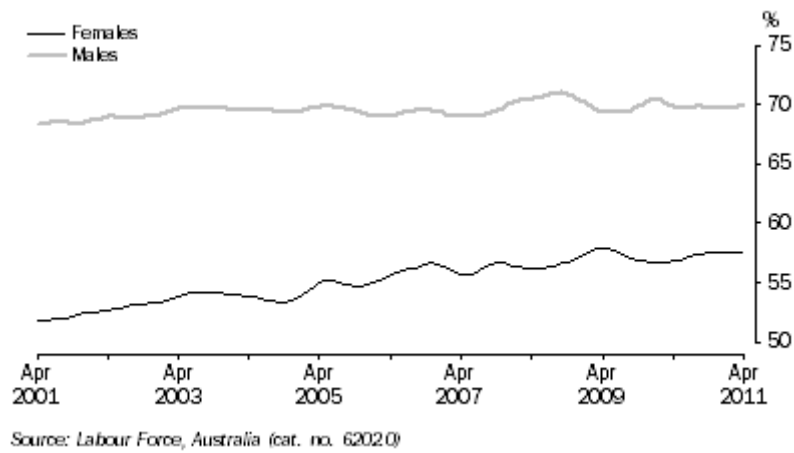


The participation rate for South Australian males has increased slightly over recent months to be 69.9% in April 2011. While historically higher than the South Australian rate, the Australian participation rate for males has fallen slightly, and in April 2011 was 72.5%.

The participation rate for South Australian females remained steady in April 2011 at 57.6% compared to the national participation rate for females of 59.0% at the same time.

## PARTICIPATION RATE, Trend - South Australia





### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to the article [Impact of the floods on the Labour Force Survey](#) in Labour Force, Australia, Jan 2011 (cat. no. 6202.0).

## Incomes



### INCOMES

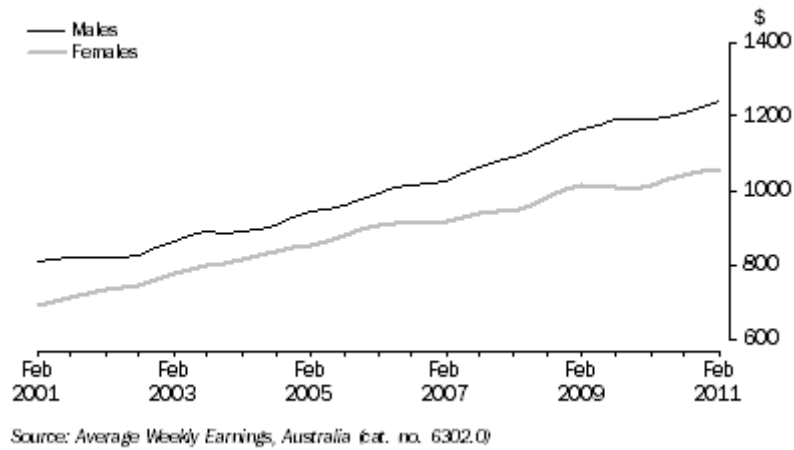
#### AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

The trend estimate of average weekly (ordinary time) earnings for full-time adult persons in South Australia increased by 3.7% to \$1,173.50 in the 12 months to February 2011. Nationally, the trend estimate of average weekly (ordinary time) earnings increased 3.9% (up to \$1,288.10).

In the 12 months to February 2011, average weekly full-time earnings in South Australia for both males and females increased by 3.7%; males increasing to \$1,239.70, females to \$1,052.80. Following a period of relatively flat quarterly growth, South Australian male earnings has shown a steady increase in recent quarters. Conversely, the series for female earnings has flattened over recent quarters after a period of higher growth. On average, South Australian females working full-time earn 15.1% less than their male counterparts.

Nationally, male average weekly full-time earnings increased 3.8% to \$1,377.30 and female earnings rose 4.3% to \$1,139.80 in the year to February 2011.

#### FULL-TIME ORDINARY EARNINGS, South Australia - Trend



For information on the wage price index, please refer to the '[Price Indexes](#)' topic.

### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## State Accounts



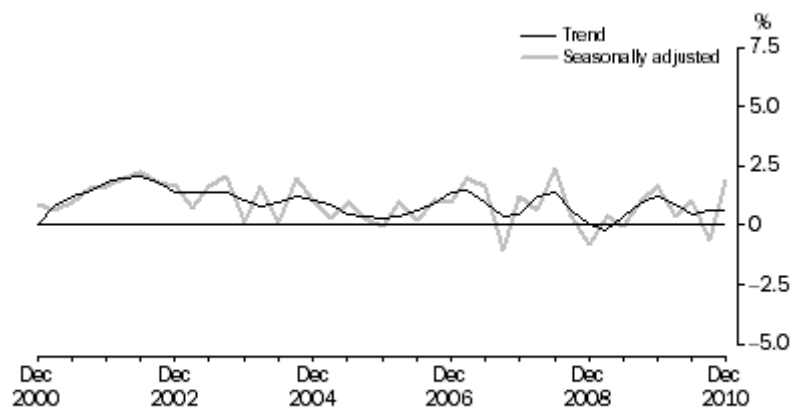
### STATE ACCOUNTS

#### STATE ACCOUNTS

South Australia's December quarter 2010 State Final Demand in chain volume (trend) terms was \$21,927m; an increase of 0.6% from the September quarter 2010 and 2.7% over the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Australia's Domestic Final Demand grew 0.5% to \$327,225m in the December quarter 2010.

All states and territories recorded increases for the December quarter 2010. The Australian Capital Territory reported the strongest growth for the period (up 1.5%), while Western Australia recorded the weakest (up 0.1%).

**STATE FINAL DEMAND**, Chain volume measures, Quarterly change, South Australia

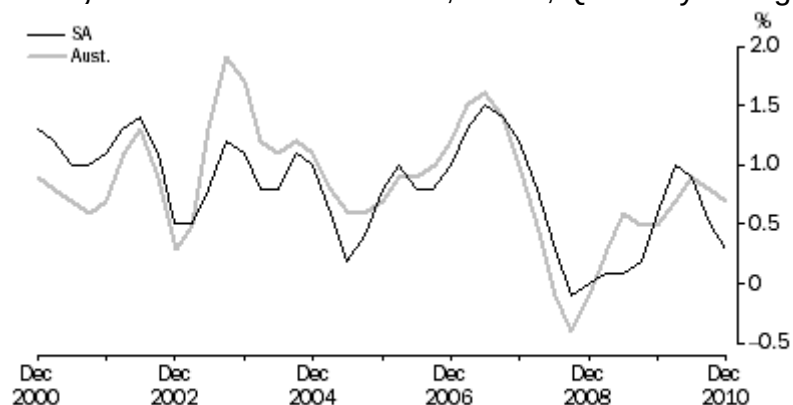


Source: Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product (cat. no. 5206.0)

## HOUSEHOLD FINAL CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE (HFCE)

In chain volume (trend) terms, South Australia's December quarter 2010 HFCE was \$12,400m; an increase of 0.3% over the result recorded in the September quarter 2010 and representing 7.0% of the national total (\$176,312m). The value of HFCE for Australia increased by 0.7% between the September and December quarters 2010.

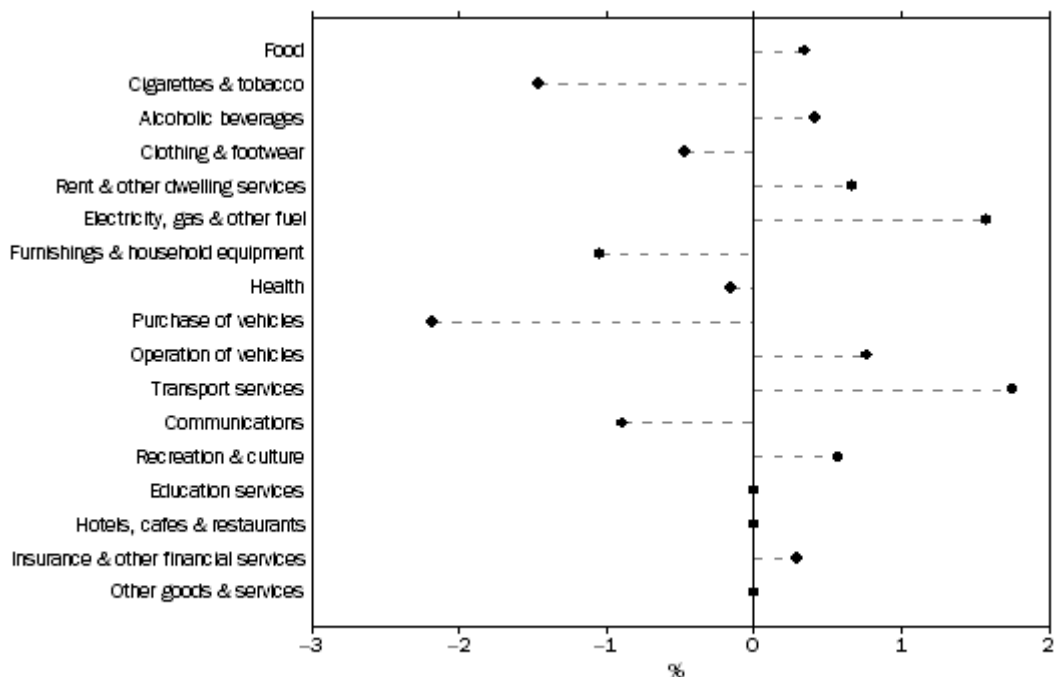
### HFCE, Chain volume measures, Trend, Quarterly change



Source: Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product (cat. no. 5206.0)

The main contributors to growth in HFCE in South Australia for the December quarter 2010 were Transport services (up 1.8% from the September quarter 2010), Electricity, gas and other fuel (up 1.6%) and Operation of vehicles (up 0.8%). The largest decreases in expenditure were for Purchase of vehicles (down 2.2%), Cigarettes and tobacco (down 1.5%) and Furnishings and household equipment (down 1.0%).

### HFCE, Chain volume measures, Trend, Quarterly change, South Australia - December Quarter 2010



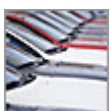
Source: Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product (cat. no. 5206.0)

At the national level, expenditure increases were reported for most categories. The largest increases were for Transport services (up 2.4% from the September quarter 2010), Electricity, gas and other fuels (up 1.7%), and Recreation and culture (up 1.5%). The largest decreases in expenditure were for Purchase of vehicles (down 1.1%).

#### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## Consumption

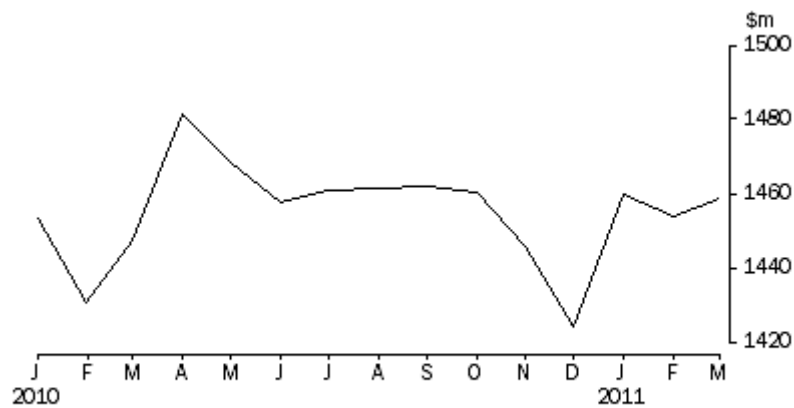


### CONSUMPTION

#### RETAIL TRADE

The seasonally adjusted estimate for South Australia's retail turnover rose to \$1,458.5 in March 2011. This represented an increase of 0.3% from the previous month (\$1,453.6m), and 0.8% above the sales recorded in March 2010 (\$1,447.5m). In contrast, national retail turnover fell to \$20,457.4m in March 2011; a decrease of 0.5% over the previous month but 2.3% above the sales recorded in March 2010 (\$20,001.3m). South Australia's contribution to total retail turnover in Australia remained steady at 7.1% in March 2011.

**RETAIL TURNOVER**, Seasonally adjusted, South Australia

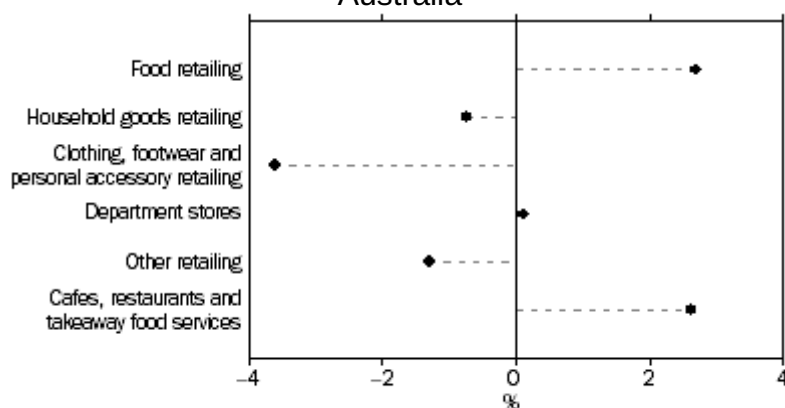


Source: Retail Trade, Australia (cat. no. 8501.0)

Comparing March 2011 with March 2010, the South Australian industry groups with the largest percentage increases in retail turnover (in seasonally adjusted terms) were Food retailing, up 2.7% to \$598.9m and Cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services, up 2.6% to \$148.8m.

Clothing, footwear and personal accessories and Other retailing recorded the largest industry group decreases in turnover over this period, falling by 3.6% and 1.3% respectively.

#### **RETAIL TURNOVER, Seasonally adjusted, Change from March 2010 to March 2011, South Australia**



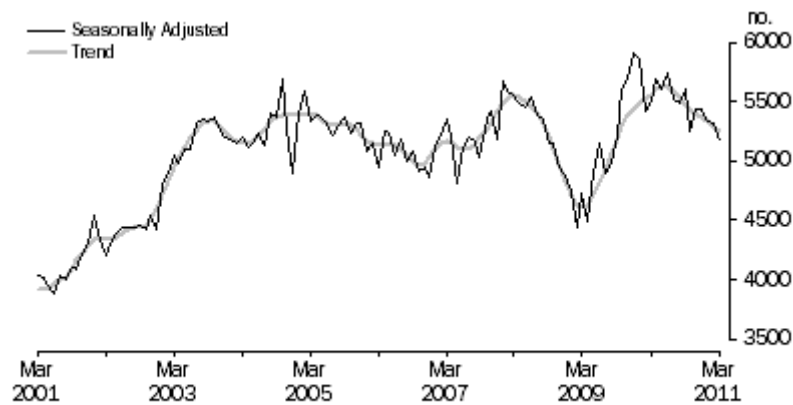
Source: Retail Trade, Australia (cat. no. 8501.0)

#### **NEW MOTOR VEHICLE SALES**

In trend terms, sales of new passenger vehicles in South Australia fell to 3,045 in March 2011. This represents a decrease of 1.1% from the February sales (3,079) and is 6.4% lower than sales in March 2010 (3,254). Total new vehicles sales in South Australia fell 0.8% in March 2011 to 5,251.

In Australia, new passenger vehicle sales fell 0.7% to 47,824 in March 2011 from 48,138 in February. The March 2011 estimate is 4.1% below the new passenger vehicle sales for the same time the previous year (49,886). Total new vehicle sales increased 0.2% to 85,462 in March 2011.

#### **NEW MOTOR VEHICLE SALES, South Australia**



Source: Sales of New Motor Vehicles, Australia (cat. no. 9314.0)

## \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## Investment



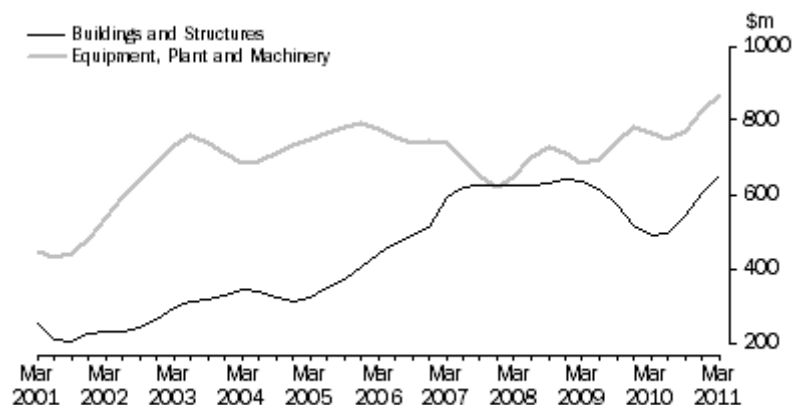
### INVESTMENT

#### PRIVATE NEW CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Between the December quarter 2010 and March quarter 2011, the South Australian chain volume (trend) estimate of private new capital expenditure rose by 6.4% to \$1,517m. Expenditure on Buildings and structures rose \$49m (8.1%) to \$651m, and expenditure on Equipment, plant and machinery rose \$42m (5.1%) to \$865m.

Over the same period, private new capital expenditure for Australia rose \$981m (3.3%) to \$30,915m. Expenditure on Equipment, plant and machinery rose 2.6%, and expenditure on Buildings and structures rose 3.8%.

#### PRIVATE NEW CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, South Australia - Chain volume measures - Trend



Source: Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia (cat. no. 5625.0)

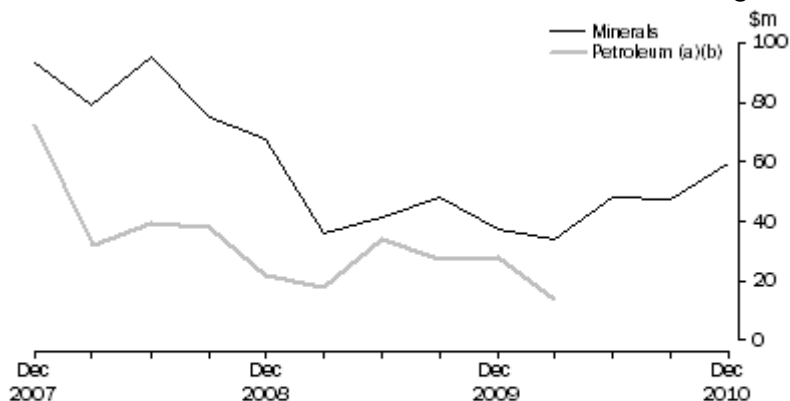
## MINERAL AND PETROLEUM EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE

The value of South Australian mineral exploration expenditure (in original terms) was \$59.5m in the December quarter 2010; an increase of 25.6% over the previous quarter but 37.4% below the peak recorded in the June quarter 2008 (\$95.2m). Australian expenditure on mineral exploration was \$703.3m in the December quarter 2010; an increase of 5.1% from the September quarter 2010 estimate (\$669.4m).

Exploration expenditure on Copper (\$23.6m) and Uranium (\$17.5m) once again accounted for more than two thirds (69.1%) of all South Australian mineral exploration expenditure in the December quarter 2010. A further \$9.8m was spent on exploration for Iron ore.

Data relating to expenditure on petroleum exploration in South Australia (and Victoria) were not available for publication in the June or September quarters 2010, however in the December quarter 2010, expenditure was \$15.1m. This latest estimate was 46.4% below expenditure for December 2009. Nationally, expenditure on petroleum exploration decreased marginally by 0.1% from \$850.4m to \$849.6m between the September and December quarters 2010.

### MINERAL AND PETROLEUM EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE, Original, South Australia



(a) Data relating to expenditure on petroleum exploration in South Australia were not available for publication in the June or September quarter 2010.  
(b) December quarter 2010 expenditure \$15.1m.

Source: Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia (cat. no. 8412.0)

### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## Construction



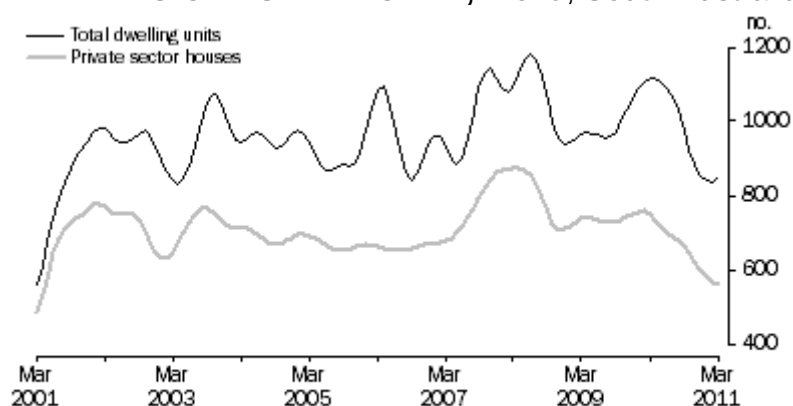
### CONSTRUCTION

## BUILDING APPROVALS

The March 2011 trend estimate for the number of dwelling units approved in South Australia has risen for the first time since falling from its peak in March 2010. The current estimate of 851 represents an increase of 1.8% over the previous month (836), but is 23.9% lower than the peak recorded a year earlier (1,118). Nationally, the number of dwelling unit approvals fell (1.0%) to 13,130, with the March 2011 estimate 15.1% below the peak recorded in February 2010 (15,458).

The trend estimate for the number of private sector houses approved in South Australia fell slightly (1.4%) to 561 in March 2011. Private sector house approvals as a proportion of total dwelling unit approvals was 67.2% in March 2010, while in March 2011 this proportion was lower at 65.9%.

**DWELLING UNITS APPROVED, Trend, South Australia**



Source: Building Approvals, Australia (cat. no. 8731.0)

In original terms, for the year to March 2011 the total number of dwelling units approved in South Australia fell by 4.0%. Decreases were recorded in four of the seven Statistical Divisions (SD) with the largest decreases seen in the Northern SD (down 30.0%) and the South East SD (down 22.4%).

These decreases in dwelling unit approvals in the year to March 2011 were moderated by increases in the Murray Lands SD (up 39.4%) and the Yorke and Lower North SD (up 21.1%).

**DWELLING UNITS APPROVED, by Statistical Division, Original, South Australia**

|                        | Year ended March 2010 |                                | Year ended March 2011 |                                |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
|                        | Dwelling units<br>no. | Change over previous year<br>% | Dwelling units<br>no. | Change over previous year<br>% |
| Adelaide               | 8 704                 | -1.7                           | 8 141                 | -6.5                           |
| Outer Adelaide         | 1 530                 | -9.9                           | 1 550                 | 1.3                            |
| Yorke and Lower North  | 455                   | -17.3                          | 551                   | 21.1                           |
| Murray Lands           | 459                   | -9.6                           | 640                   | 39.4                           |
| South East             | 419                   | -20.9                          | 325                   | -22.4                          |
| Eyre                   | 261                   | -16.9                          | 247                   | -5.4                           |
| Northern               | 367                   | -23.2                          | 257                   | -30.0                          |
| <b>South Australia</b> | <b>12 195</b>         | <b>-5.7</b>                    | <b>11 711</b>         | <b>-4.0</b>                    |

Source: Building Approvals, Australia - data available on request



## **\*DATA NOTES**

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

The trend estimates should be interpreted with caution as the underlying behaviour of building approvals may be affected by initiatives within the Government stimulus package, which included the "Building the Education Revolution" (BER) program and the Social Housing Initiative as well as other developments associated with global economic conditions. From June 2009 to February 2010 BER impacts were quantified and removed from the trend estimates because of its short term nature. From March 2010 these impacts are no longer removed from the trend estimates as their effect has significantly declined. For more details on trend estimates, please see paragraphs 20 to 23 of the explanatory notes.

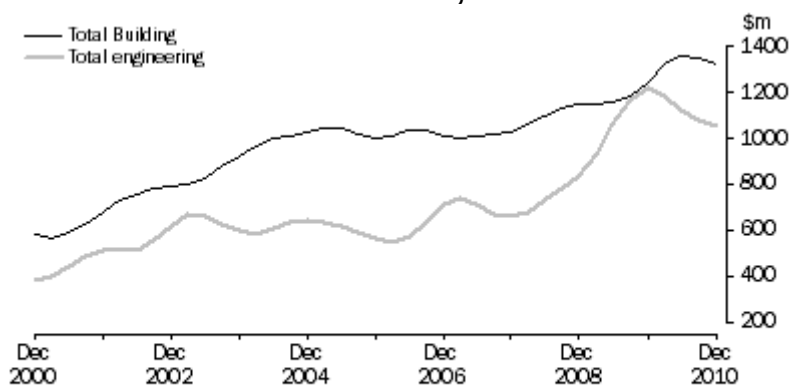
## **CONSTRUCTION WORK DONE**

In the December quarter 2010, the total value of building work done (in trend terms)\* in South Australia fell to \$1,328.8m, a decrease of 1.5% over the September quarter 2010.

Between the December quarters 2007 and 2009, the trend\* estimate for the value of engineering work done rose sharply (\$660.4m to \$1,223.6m). Since this time, the value of engineering work has fallen to \$1,052.6m in the December quarter 2010; 2.5% below the September quarter.

The upsurge in engineering construction between the December quarters 2007 and 2009 was the focus of the feature article presented in the April 2010 issue of SA Stats.

### **VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORK DONE\*, Chain volume measures - SA: Trend**



Source: Building Activity, Australia (cat. no. 8752.0)  
Engineering Construction Activity, Australia (cat. no. 8762.0)

## **\*INTRODUCTION OF NEW BASE YEAR**

A new base year, 2008-09, has been introduced into the chain volume estimates which has resulted in revisions to growth rates in subsequent periods. In addition, the chain volume estimates have been re-referenced to 2008-09, thereby preserving additivity in the quarters after the reference year. Re-referencing affects the levels of, but not the movements in, chain volume estimates.

# Price Indexes



## PRICE INDEXES

### CONTENTS

[Consumer price index](#)

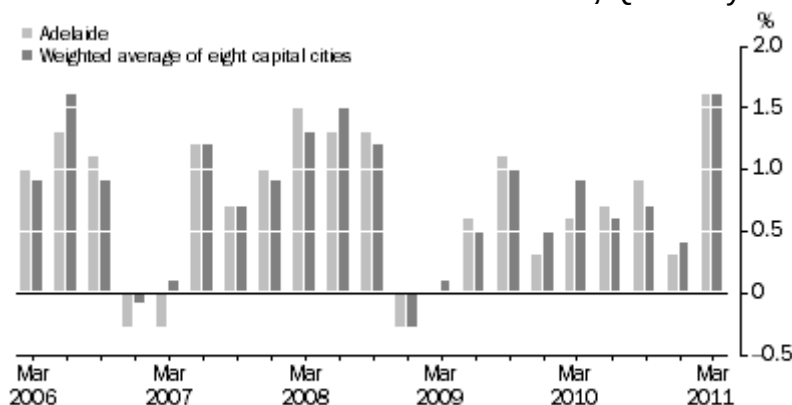
[Wage price index](#)

[House price index](#)

### CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The all groups consumer price index (CPI) for Adelaide rose 1.6% during the March quarter 2011, which reflected the 1.6% increase for the weighted average of the eight capital cities over the same period. Adelaide's CPI increased by 3.6% in the year ending March quarter 2011, compared with a 3.3% rise in the weighted average of the eight capital cities.

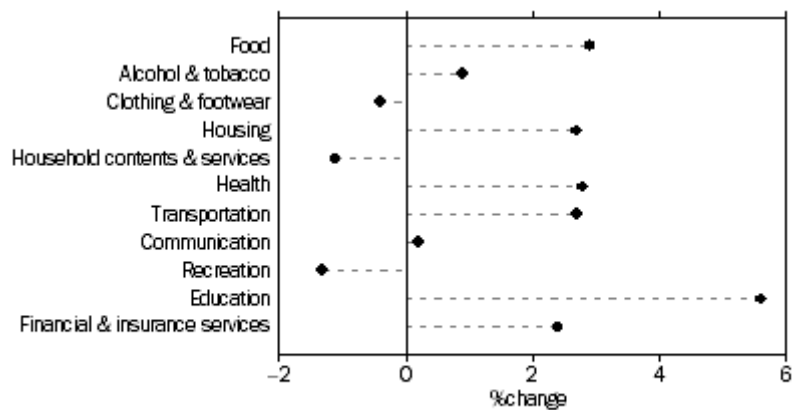
#### CONSUMER PRICE INDEX - ALL GROUPS, Quarterly change



Source: Consumer Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6401.0)

Adelaide's largest percentage increases in prices from the previous quarter were for Education (5.6%) and Food (2.9%). The largest decreases in prices from the previous quarter were for Recreation (1.3%) and Household contents and services (1.1%).

#### CPI GROUPS, Quarterly change, Adelaide - March Quarter 2011

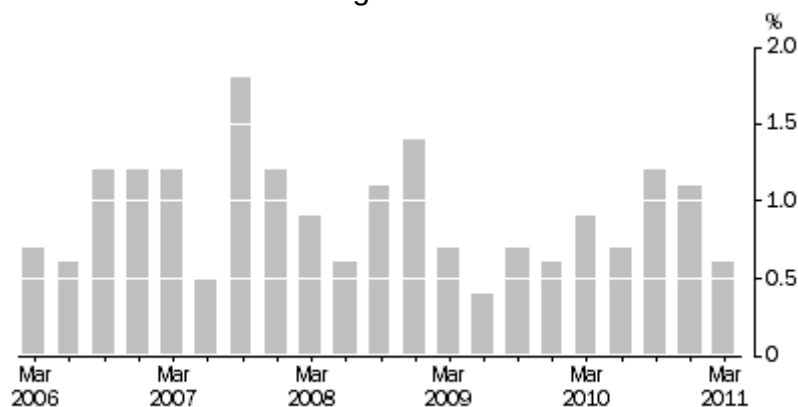


Source: Consumer Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6401.0)

## WAGE PRICE INDEX

The wage price index for all employee jobs in South Australia increased by 0.6% (in original terms) between the December quarter 2010 and March quarter 2011. This was lower than the national increase of 0.9% over the same period. Of all the states and territories, Northern Territory recorded the largest increase (1.2%) and Queensland and South Australia the smallest (0.6%).

### WAGE PRICE INDEX QUARTERLY CHANGES, Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses - Original: South Australia

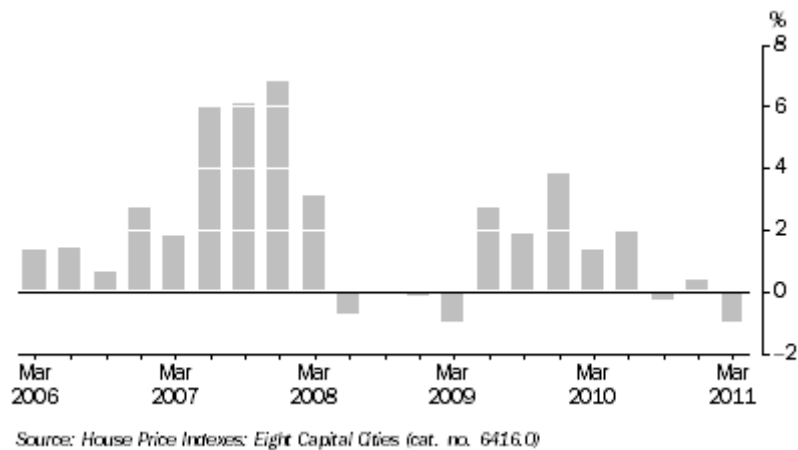


Source: Labour Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6345.0)

## HOUSE PRICE INDEX

Preliminary estimates show the price index for established houses for Adelaide (in original terms) has fallen by 1.0% in the March quarter 2011, following a rise of 0.4% the previous quarter. Over the same period, the weighted average of the eight capital cities also fell by 1.7%. Brisbane (2.5%) and Melbourne (2.5%) recorded the largest price index falls of all the capital cities, while Perth (0.5%) and Hobart (0.4%) recorded the only price index rises.

### ESTABLISHED HOUSE PRICES, Quarterly change, Adelaide



In the 12 months to the March quarter 2011, preliminary estimates show the price index for established houses for Adelaide rose 0.9%, while the weighted average of the eight capital cities fell 0.2%. Canberra (1.1%) and Melbourne (1.1%) recorded the largest increases of all the capital cities, whilst Brisbane (3.6%) and Perth (3.2%) recorded the only decreases.

#### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## Housing Finance

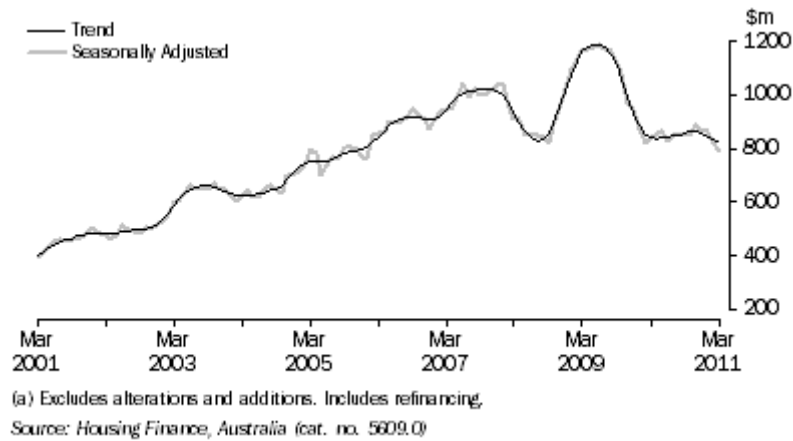


### HOUSING FINANCE

#### HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS

The trend estimate of the total value of housing finance commitments (owner occupation) in South Australia fell in March 2011 to \$819m. The March estimate is 1.7% lower than the previous month, but 31.1% lower than the peak value of housing finance commitments recorded in May 2009 (\$1,189m). Nationally, the value of housing finance commitments for owner occupation was \$13,335m in March 2011; 1.7% lower than February 2011, and 22.3% lower than the peak recorded in June 2009 (\$17,152m).

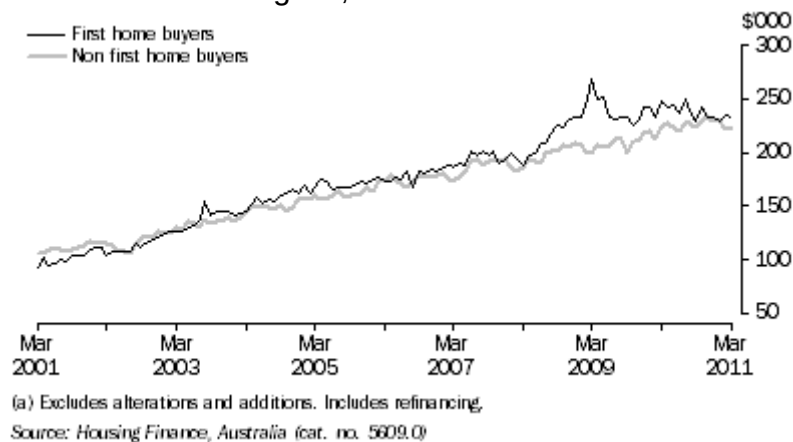
#### HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS (OWNER OCCUPATION) (a), South Australia



In March 2011, the average home loan size for owner occupied dwellings in South Australia was \$224,500, a small increase of 0.4% over the previous month, but 21.4% lower than the average loan size for Australia (\$285,500).

In March 2011, the average loan commitment for first home buyers in South Australia fell to \$232,800; a decrease of 1.1% over the February estimate but 13.2% below the peak recorded in March 2009 (\$268,300). The average loan size for non-first home buyers in March 2011 rose slightly to \$223,300; an increase of 0.5%. The average loan size for first home buyers in March 2011 is 4.3% higher than for non-first home buyers.

#### HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS (OWNER OCCUPATION) (a), Average loan size, Original, South Australia



For information on the house price index, please refer to the '[Price Indexes](#)' topic.

#### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## International Merchandise Trade



## INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE

### EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

On a recorded trade basis, the value of South Australia's exports in March 2011 was \$1,149m; an increase of 10.8% from February 2011 (\$1,037m) and 74.8% higher than the value recorded in March 2010 (\$657m).

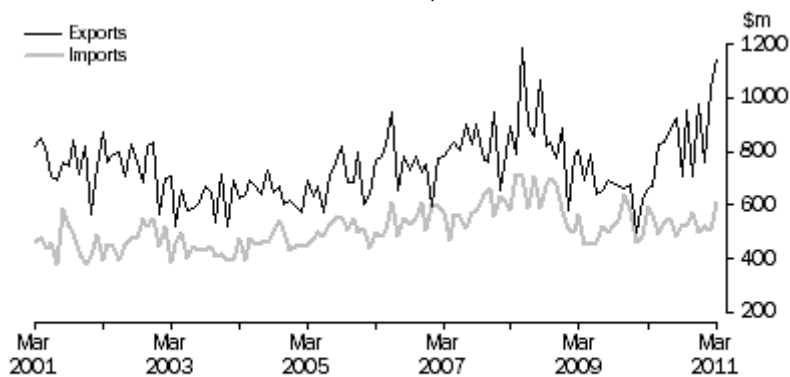
In March 2011, Wheat (13.6%) and Copper (13.4%) were South Australia's leading export commodities, accounting for over a quarter of the state's exports. The next largest contributors were Oil-seeds and oleaginous fruits (9.6%) and Alcohol (8.6%).

The value of Australian merchandise exports for March 2011 rose 22.6% to \$21,131m. The March estimate is 26.4% higher than at the same time in the previous year (\$16,712m).

At the same time, the value of South Australian merchandise imports rose to \$606m. The March 2011 estimate represents an increase of 20.0% from the previous month (\$505m) and is 2.3% higher than the value recorded in March 2010 (\$593m).

The value of Australian merchandise imports for March 2011 rose to \$18,544m; an increase of 11.8% from February 2011 and 2.8% higher than the value recorded in March of the previous year (\$18,036m).

### VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE EXPORTS AND IMPORTS (a), on a recorded trade basis, South Australia



(a) Exports where the final stage of production or manufacture occurs in South Australia.

Source: *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0)

### \*DATA NOTES

Please refer to source publications for impact of floods on data and collections.

## Water



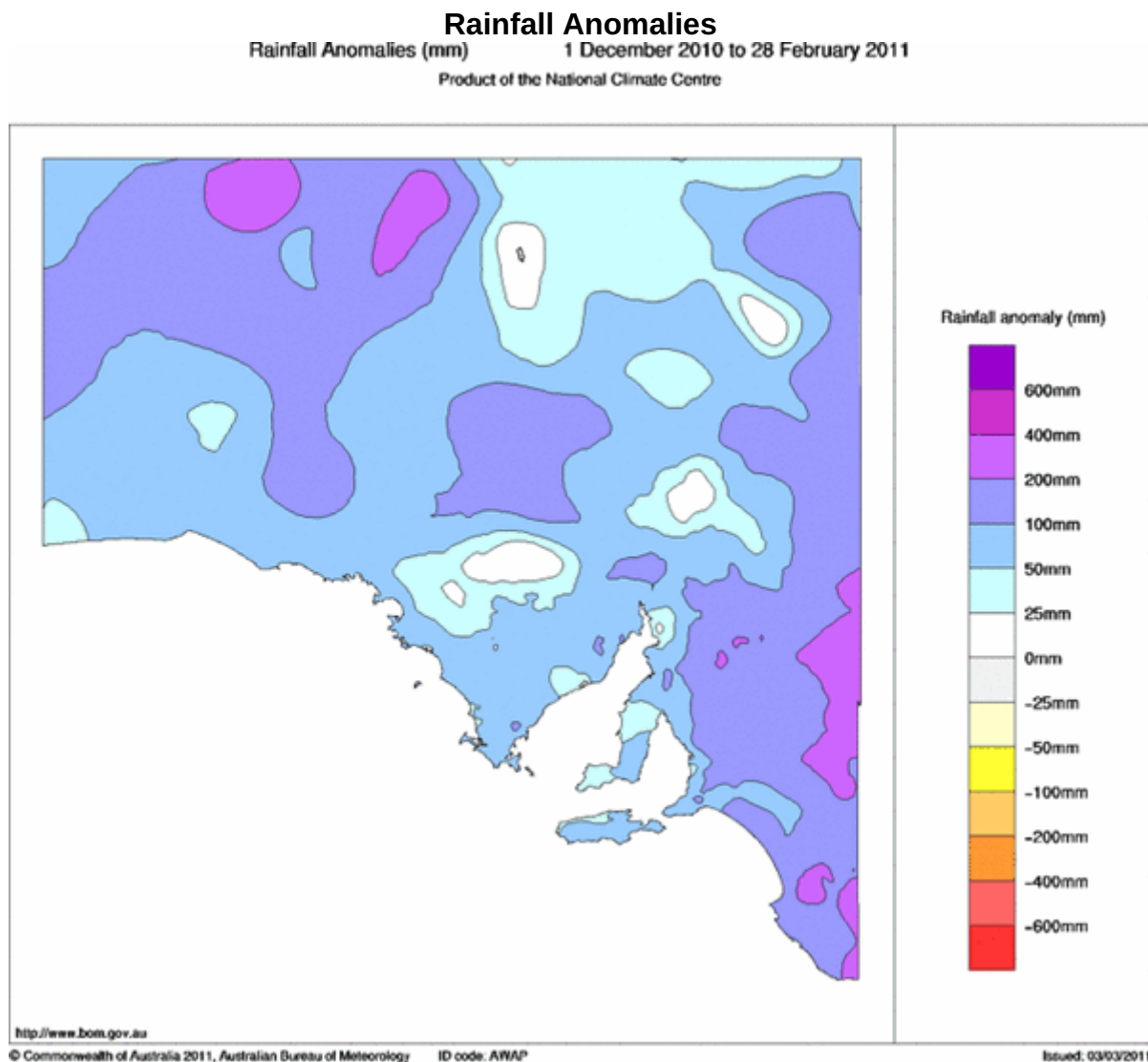
## WATER

### RAINFALL

According to the Bureau of Meteorology's Seasonal Climate Summary for South Australia, Summer 2010-11 was the third wettest on record.

The well above average rainfall was predominantly a result of one of the strongest La Nina events on record. Forty seven locations, mainly in the east of the state, experienced their wettest summer on record and sixty seven locations had their highest ever daily rainfall in the summer period.

The highest total rainfall for the state was recorded in Ernabella (Pukatja), located in South Australia's pastoral district, with 341.8mm.

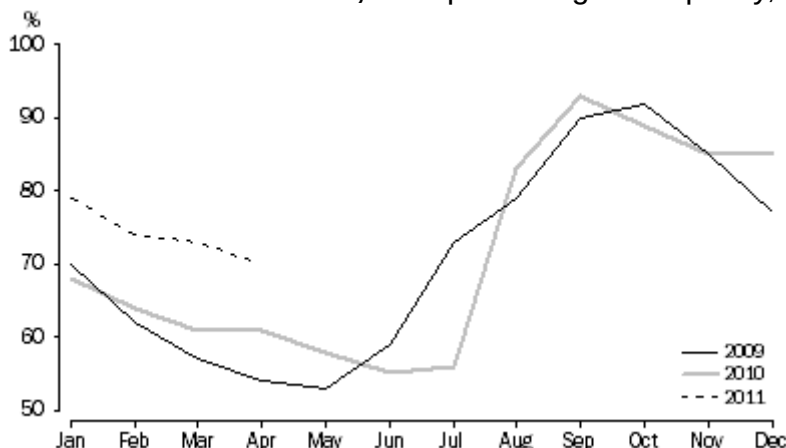


Source: 3-monthly rainfall anomalies for South Australia, Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

### RESERVOIR LEVELS

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology reported below average rainfall for Adelaide over April 2011. As a result, Adelaide's reservoir levels fell slightly from 73% to 70% by the end of the month. Despite this, storage levels remain considerably higher than at the end of April 2010 (61%), and April 2009 (54%).

**TOTAL RESERVOIR STORAGE, As a percentage of capacity, Adelaide**



Source: [SA Water daily reservoir levels](#)

## About this Release

SA Stats provides an overview of the South Australian population and economy. The publication is updated on a monthly basis, with most releases also featuring an article that provides a South Australian focus on economic, social and environmental issues.

Explanatory Notes are not included in SA Stats in the form found in other Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publications. Readers are directed to the Explanatory Notes contained in related ABS publications.

## SA Stats (Feature Article)

### FEATURE ARTICLE: TRENDS IN FEDERAL VOTER TURNOUT AND INFORMAL VOTING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

#### INTRODUCTION

Australia introduced compulsory voting in federal elections in 1924, and is currently one of nineteen countries that enforces compulsory voting for all eligible citizens aged 18 years and over (AEC 2006). Arguments exist both for and against compulsory voting. Arguments in favour include the notion of voting being a civic duty comparable to compulsory education and jury duty, that it teaches the benefits of political participation, and that it more accurately reflects the "will of the electorate". Arguments against compulsory voting include it being an infringement of liberty, that it forces those who are ill informed and those with little interest in politics to the polls, and that it may increase the number of informal votes (AEC 2010a).



While there is support on both sides of the argument, research has found that compulsory voting has a 'social levelling' effect, whereby all, rather than just the privileged and well-established sectors of society are provided a voice at election time (Louth and Hill, 2005). Informal voting levels are said to be influenced by sociological factors, specifically, age, educational attainment and English proficiency (AEC, 2003). From this, it could be proposed that those in our compulsory system who fall within the more vulnerable or marginal cohorts of age, educational attainment, or English proficiency would have no effect on voter turnout levels, but some effect on informal voting levels.

Using published data from the AEC combined with ABS 2006 Census data, this article looks broadly at voter turnout and informal voting rates at recent federal elections at state level, before focusing on South Australia and its eleven Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (CED). The measures of voter turnout and informal voting are also compared against the marginal cohorts of age, educational attainment and English proficiency to ascertain if there was any relationship in the recent 2010 federal election.

The subsequent analysis of the 2010 federal election in South Australia found that CEDs:

- with a high proportion of electors aged 18 to 24 years and/or 70 years and over did not show markedly different patterns of voter turnout or informal voting levels than other CEDs. These findings challenge the notion of age influencing informal voting.
- with a high proportion of persons aged 18 years and over with a bachelor degree or above had a low voter turnout. The relationship between higher educational attainment and low voter turnout was surprising,
- with a high proportion of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification had high levels of informal voting while CEDs with a high proportion of persons with a bachelor degree or above had low rates of informal voting . This is consistent with what would be expected.
- with a high proportion of persons aged 18 years and over who spoke little or no English did not show markedly different patterns of voter turnout, but higher proportions of informal votes. Both findings are consistent with what would have been expected.

## **VOTER TURNOUT**

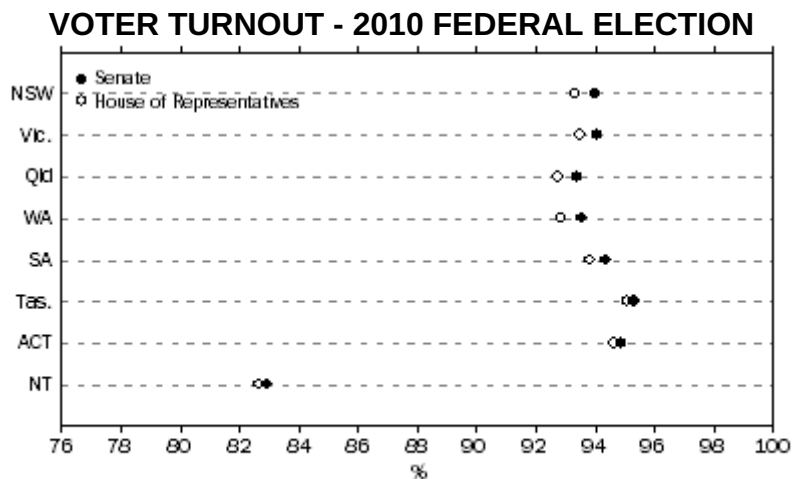
Voter turnout is a measure of the number of eligible voters who cast a ballot in any given election. As a form of political participation, the level of voter turnout in some instances can indicate a strong democracy and how representative governments are of the electorate, but can be a difficult measure to interpret. In terms of measuring progress it is perhaps more informative to consider the proportion of informal votes cast (ABS, 2010b).

Nevertheless, voter turnout for Australian federal elections is recorded for both houses of parliament which consists of the House of Representatives (HR) or the lower house, and the Senate (S) or the upper house. The legislative powers of both houses are nearly equal, however typically, it is the leader of the party (or coalition of parties) with a majority of members in the lower house, who is invited by the Governor-general to form government.

With compulsory voting in place, fines of between \$20 and \$50 can be issued to those who fail to vote without valid and sufficient reason (AEC 2008).

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

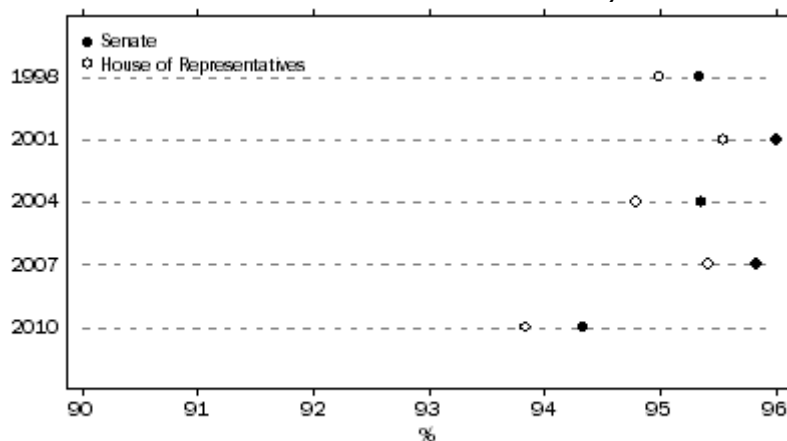
In the recent 2010 federal election, South Australian voter turnout was the third highest for both the House of Representatives and the Senate (93.8% and 94.3% respectively) of all states and territories, behind Tasmania (95.1% and 95.3%) and the Australian Capital Territory (94.6% and 94.9%).



Source: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

Voter turnout in South Australia for the 2010 election was lower than for the four preceding federal elections, in both houses of parliament. This means proportionally fewer South Australians who were enrolled to vote actually chose to vote in 2010.

### VOTER TURNOUT - FEDERAL ELECTIONS, South Australia



Source: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

With voter turnout consistently lower in the ballot for the House of Representatives, this will be the focus for the remainder of discussion throughout the article.

### ***South Australia's Commonwealth Electoral Division level***

When comparing voter turnout in the eleven South Australian CEDs applicable in the 2004, 2007 and 2010 federal elections, the CED of Adelaide has recorded one of the lowest voter turnout rates in the state. In 2010, voter turnout was 92.7%, down from 94.6% in 2007. The inner metropolitan CED of Adelaide spans 75 square kilometres from Grand Junction Road in the north to Cross Road in the south, and Portrush Road in the east to South Road in the

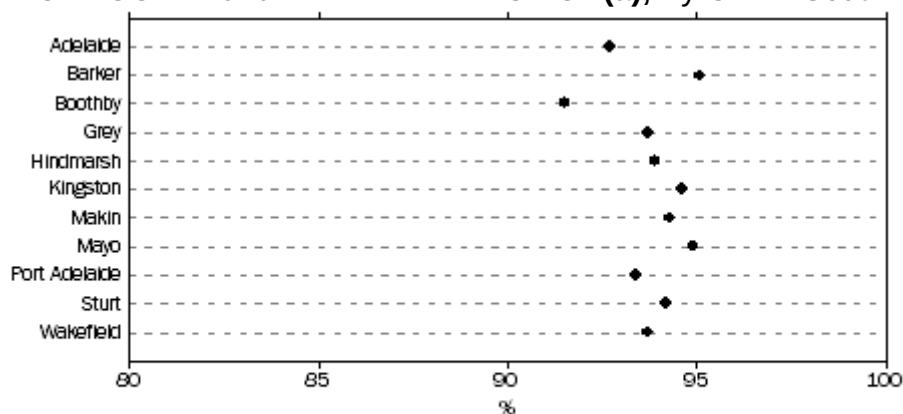
west, including suburbs such as Kilburn, Northfield, Toorak Gardens, Norwood, Highgate, Clarence Park and Croydon Park (AEC 2011).

In 2004 and 2007, the CED of Boothby recorded voter turnout rates close to the states average. In the 2010 election however, the CED of Boothby recorded the lowest voter turnout (91.5%) and experienced the largest drop in turnout (down 4.2%) of all South Australian CEDs. The southern outer metropolitan CED of Boothby covers an area of 123 square kilometres. Some of the suburbs include Clarence Gardens, Urrbrae, Belair, Blackwood, Marion and Marino.

In the 2010 federal election, the CED of Barker continued its leading trend, recording the states highest voter turnout (95.1%). Barker covers over 60,000 square kilometres and contains the upper and lower South East up to the South Australian, Victorian and New South Wales borders, through to the Riverland, Murrayland and most of the Barossa Valley. Some of the towns include Berri, Kingston SE, Mount Gambier, Tailem Bend and part of Nuriootpa.

For a visual representation of the South Australian Commonwealth electoral boundaries used in the aforementioned elections, please refer to <<http://www.aec.gov.au/Electorates/maps.htm>>

#### **VOTER TURNOUT - 2010 FEDERAL ELECTION(a), By CED - South Australia**



(a) House of Representatives

Source: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

#### **By Age**

Age may influence voter turnout, with electors in the younger (18-24 years) and older (70 years and over) age groups perhaps less likely to fulfil their elector obligations. Reasons for this may include ignorance or indifference towards the political process, or an incapacity to participate on the day. However, when examining AEC 2010 elector count data for South Australia by division and age group, the evidence appears mixed.

The CEDs of Hindmarsh and Sturt recorded mid to high levels of voter turnout overall, yet had the two highest combined proportions of electors in these age groups (18-24 years and 70 years and over) with 29.8% and 29.0% respectively.

The CEDs of Kingston and Makin, both with high levels of voter turnout (94.6% and 94.3% respectively), had some of the highest proportions of younger electors (11.4% and 11.2%), and the lowest proportion of older electors (12.2% and 12.5%). In comparison, the CED of Adelaide comprised similar proportions of younger (10.7%) and older electors (14.5%) as Kingston and Makin, yet recorded the second lowest voter turnout (92.7%) in the state.

Furthermore, the CEDs of Sturt and Boothby had contrasting voter turnout levels; Sturt with higher (94.2%) and Boothby with the lowest (91.5%) despite having very similar proportions of younger (10.8% and 10.6% respectively - mid to high levels relatively) and older electors (18.1% and 18.4% respectively - high levels relatively).

From the above analysis it appears that age is not a strong determinant of voter turnout.

### **ELECTOR COUNT, South Australia 2010**

| <b>Divisions</b> | <b>Age(a)</b>      |                          |                             | <b>Voter Turnout(b)</b>         |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                  | <b>18-24 years</b> | <b>70 years and over</b> | <b>Combined age cohorts</b> | <b>House of Representatives</b> |
|                  | %                  | %                        | %                           | %                               |
| Adelaide         | 10.7               | 14.5                     | 25.2                        | 92.7                            |
| Barker           | 9.5                | 16.0                     | 25.5                        | 95.1                            |
| Boothby          | 10.8               | 18.1                     | 28.9                        | 91.5                            |
| Grey             | 8.9                | 16.6                     | 25.5                        | 93.7                            |
| Hindmarsh        | 9.9                | 19.9                     | 29.8                        | 93.9                            |
| Kingston         | 11.4               | 12.2                     | 23.6                        | 94.6                            |
| Makin            | 11.2               | 12.5                     | 23.7                        | 94.3                            |
| Mayo             | 10.0               | 14.6                     | 24.6                        | 94.9                            |
| Port Adelaide    | 10.7               | 14.1                     | 24.8                        | 93.4                            |
| Sturt            | 10.6               | 18.4                     | 29.0                        | 94.2                            |
| Wakefield        | 11.5               | 13.9                     | 25.4                        | 93.7                            |

(a) Age percentages based on elector count as at July 2010

(b) Voter Turnout percentages based on election day enrolment numbers. Note, the difference between the South Australian total figure is 378 persons.

Source: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

### **Educational attainment**

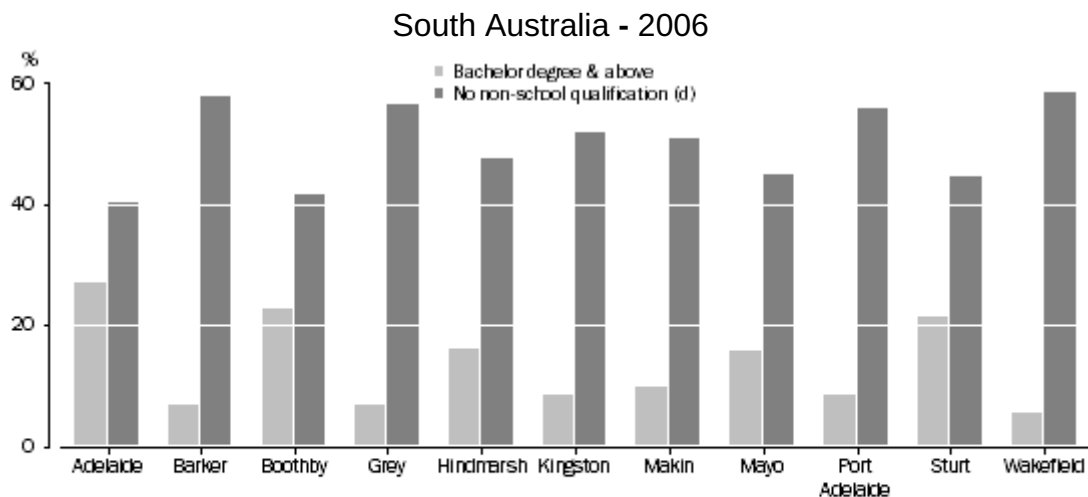
While age alone appears an inconclusive determinant to voter turnout, what about a person's level of education? Is this likely to impact on their decision to vote? Using 2006 Census data it is possible to examine the proportion of persons aged 18 years and over in each CED who fall within the education levels of bachelor degree and above and no non-school qualification. However, these education levels can only be considered indicative of those that may have been present at the 2010 federal election.

In 2006, the CED of Barker comprised the highest proportion of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification (57.7%), and one of the lowest proportions with a bachelor degree or above (6.8%). Overall voter turnout for Barker in the 2010 election, was the highest in the state (95.1%).

In contrast, the CED of Adelaide had the lowest proportion of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification (40.2%) and the highest proportion with a bachelor degree or above (27.0%). Voter turnout in the 2010 election was the second lowest in the state (92.7%).

Similarly, the CED of Boothby which recorded South Australia's lowest voter turnout in 2010 (91.5%), had generally higher levels of educational attainment in 2006, with 41.5% of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification and 22.7% with a bachelor degree or above.

### **PROPORTION OF PERSONS(a) IN CED(b)(c) WITH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT,**



(a) Aged 18 years and over.  
 (b) Using 2007 Commonwealth Electoral Division boundaries.  
 (c) Not stated category included in totals.  
 (d) Includes persons with qualification out of scope, persons with no qualifications and persons still studying first qualification.  
 Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006

Although these levels of educational attainment - based on 2006 Census data - can only be considered indicative of those present in the 2010 federal election, it would suggest that CEDs with generally higher levels of educational attainment had a lower voter turnout than CEDs with lower levels of educational attainment.

### ***English proficiency***

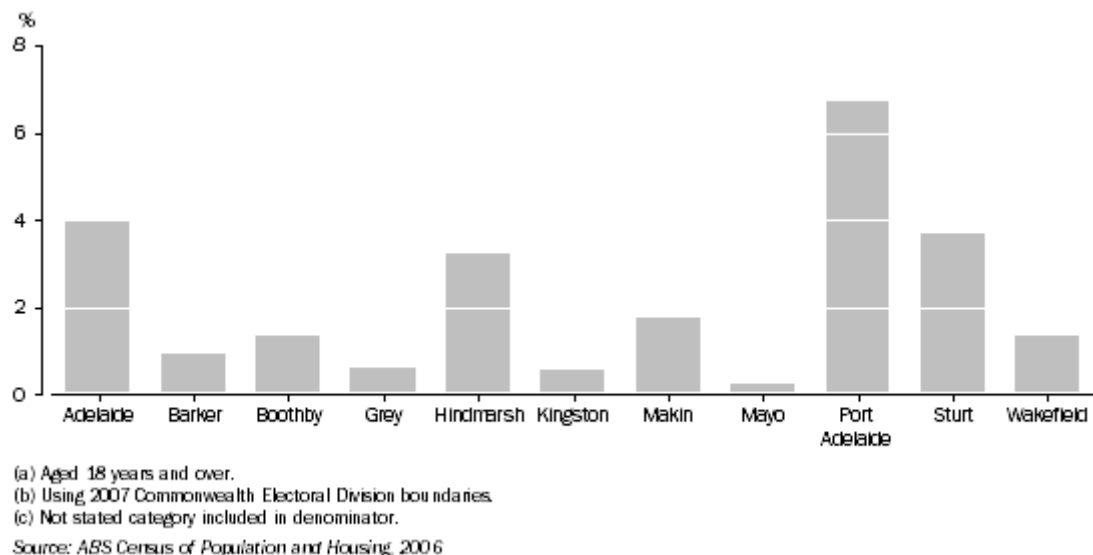
An person's English proficiency could also influence whether they vote or not based on their understanding of the electoral process.

In 2006, the South Australian divisions with the highest proportions of persons aged 18 years and over who spoke little or no English were the CEDs of Port Adelaide (6.7%), Adelaide (4.0%) and Sturt (3.7%). Those with lower proportions included Mayo (0.3%), Grey (0.6%) and Kingston (0.6%).

When examining the three CEDs with the highest proportions of persons aged 18 years and over with poor English proficiency, their respective voter turnout levels for the 2010 election were varied and contrasting. The CED of Port Adelaide had voter turnout in the mid range (93.4%); close to the state's average. The CED of Adelaide recorded voter turnout which was at lower levels (92.7%), and the CED of Sturt had voter turnout at higher levels (94.2%).

Furthermore, when considering the CED of Boothby with the state's lowest 2010 voter turnout (91.5%), it represented one of the CEDs with the lowest proportions of persons aged 18 years and over who spoke little or no English.

### **PROPORTION OF PERSONS(a) IN CED(b)(c) WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH WELL OR AT ALL, South Australia - 2006**



Based on this analysis, voter turnout in South Australian CEDs during the 2010 federal election does not appear to have been affected by age or English proficiency. CEDs with higher proportions of younger and older electors, or persons who spoke little or no English did not show low voter turnout. Analysis of educational attainment showed that CEDs with higher proportions of persons aged 18 years and over with bachelor degrees or above had lower voter turnout in 2010.

## INFORMAL VOTING

In Australia, an 'informal vote' is one in which the ballot paper is completed incorrectly and is not included in the final count. There are several reasons a ballot paper may be rendered informal (AEC 2003). Factors that exert an influence on the informal vote in Australia include confusion over differing state and federal electoral systems and their proximity to one another, political and electoral knowledge, and literacy skills (AEC 2003). It is also possible that some voters deliberately spoil their ballot paper as a form of protest, although the extent and motivations for this are largely untracked.

Similar to voter turnout, there is typically some fluctuation between informal voting levels at each federal election, as can be seen in the graph below. This demonstrates how single electoral events can be affected by unique political, social, economic and electoral factors (AEC, 2003). Differences between state informal voting levels are more likely due to differing electoral voting systems, while differences between a state's CEDs may be due to sociological factors such as age, educational attainment and English proficiency.

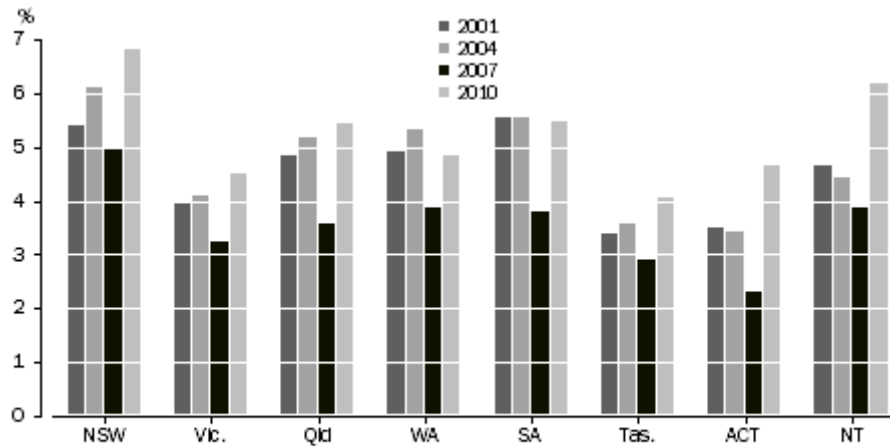
The introduction of Group Ticket Voting (GTV) in the 1984 federal Senate election, allowing voters to simply place the number '1' in one of the boxes above the line, saw informal voting levels in the Senate fall dramatically. Since this time, informal voting rates for the House of Representatives have overtaken informal voting in the Senate (Young & Hill, 2009).

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia's informal vote in the House of Representatives jumped from 2.7% in 1983 to 8.2% in 1984, becoming the highest in the nation. South Australia held this 'leading' position over six subsequent elections up until and including the 2001 election

From the graph below, the proportion of informal votes varies slightly across the states and territories, however, the overall series pattern is closely followed, with the 2007 election recording the lowest proportion of informal votes and the 2010 election recording the highest, with the exception of South Australia and Western Australia. For the 2010 election, South Australia shared the third highest (5.5%) level of informal votes along side Queensland, and behind New South Wales (6.8%) and the Northern Territory (6.2%).

#### INFORMAL VOTES - FEDERAL ELECTIONS(a)



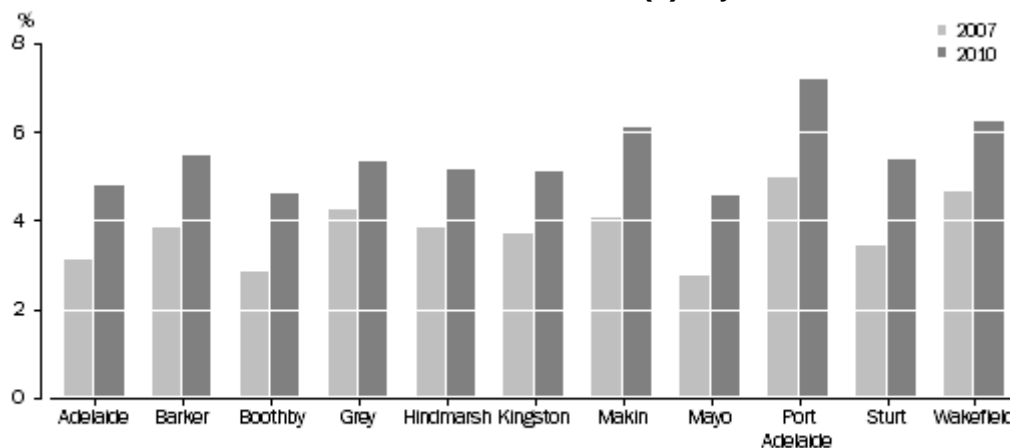
(a) House of Representatives

Source: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

#### South Australia's Commonwealth Electoral Division level

The CED of Port Adelaide recorded the highest proportion of informal votes in both the 2007 and 2010 federal elections with 5.0% and 7.2% respectively. Port Adelaide has typically recorded higher levels of informal voting over the years, with levels considerably higher than those in the CED of Mayo which had the lowest proportion of informal voting in both 2007 and 2010 (2.8% and 4.6% respectively).

#### INFORMAL VOTES - FEDERAL ELECTIONS (a), By CED - South Australia



(a) House of Representatives

Source: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

#### By Age

The impact of age on informal voting levels can be assessed by comparing the proportion of electors in each CED who fall within the younger (18-24 years) and older (70 years and over) age groups. Comparing the CEDs of Port Adelaide and Mayo, which recorded the states highest and lowest informal voting levels respectively in the 2010 election, both have very similar compositions of younger (10.7% and 10.0% respectively) and older electors

(14.1% and 14.6% respectively).

In addition, the CED of Boothby which had one of the state's highest proportions of electors from both age groups (28.9%) in the 2010 election, recorded informal voting levels identical to that of the CED of Mayo (4.6%). This would suggest that age has no perceptible bearing on informal voting levels for the aforementioned CEDs.

### ***Educational Attainment***

Based on 2006 Census data the CED of Port Adelaide, with the state's highest levels of informal voting in 2010, had a relatively high proportion of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification (55.9%), and a low proportion of persons with a bachelor degree or above (8.6%).

The CED of Mayo on the other hand, with the state's lowest levels of informal voting had a relatively low proportion of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification (44.9%) and a high proportion of persons with a bachelor degree or above (15.6%).

Furthermore, both the CEDs of Adelaide and Boothby, which had higher proportions of persons aged 18 years and over with a bachelor degree or above, had relatively lower levels of informal voting for both the 2007 and 2010 elections (2007 - 3.1%, 2010 - 4.8% and 2007 - 2.9%, 2010 - 4.6% respectively).

This suggests CEDs with relatively higher proportions of persons aged 18 years and over with no non-school qualification are more likely to record higher levels of informal voting than CEDs with relatively higher proportions of persons with bachelor degrees or above.

### ***English proficiency***

From the 2006 Census the CED of Port Adelaide showed considerably higher levels (6.7%) of persons aged 18 years and over who do not speak English well or at all, and in 2010 recorded the state's highest level of informal voting (7.2%). In contrast, the CED of Mayo which had a low proportion (0.3%) of persons aged 18 years and over who do not speak English well or at all, recorded the state's lowest level of informal voting. Results within these two extremes were less conclusive however.

From the above analysis it appears that level of educational attainment and English proficiency may have affected informal voting rates for the House of Representatives at the 2010 federal election.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the above analysis it appears that in South Australia for the 2010 federal election, the age of electors did not have an impact on voter turnout or informal voting. Educational attainment and English proficiency did appear to have an impact. There are of course other factors that impact on voter turnout and an elector's propensity to vote informally, including other more complex political, social and economic factors.

## **REFERENCES**

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2006, Census of Population and Housing, ABS, Canberra



ABS 2010b, Democracy, governance and citizenship, in Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010, cat. no. 1370.0, ABS, Canberra

AEC (Australian Electoral Commission), 2003, Research Report Number 1, Informal Vote Survey, House of Representatives 2001 Election, AEC, Canberra, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/Strategy\\_Research\\_Analysis/paper1/index.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/Strategy_Research_Analysis/paper1/index.htm)>, last viewed 04 May 2011.

AEC 2006, Compulsory Voting in Australia, AEC, Canberra, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/voting/index.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/voting/index.htm)>, last viewed 04 May 2011.

AEC 2008, Electoral Offences, AEC, Canberra, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/australian\\_electoral\\_system/electoral\\_procedures/Electoral\\_Offences.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/australian_electoral_system/electoral_procedures/Electoral_Offences.htm)>, last viewed 10 May 2011.

AEC 2009, Research Report Number 11, Analysis of Informal Voting, House of Representatives 2007 Election, AEC, Canberra, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/Strategy\\_Research\\_Analysis/paper\\_11/index.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/Strategy_Research_Analysis/paper_11/index.htm)>, last viewed 16 May 2011.

AEC 2010a, Compulsory Voting, AEC, Canberra, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/Compulsory\\_Voting.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/Compulsory_Voting.htm)>, last viewed 04 May 2011.

AEC 2010b, The Official 2010 Federal Election Results, AEC, Canberra, <<http://results.aec.gov.au/15508/Website/default.htm>>, last viewed 04 May 2011.

AEC 2010c, Annual Report 2009-2010, AEC, Canberra, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/Annual\\_Reports/](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/Annual_Reports/)>, last viewed 04 May 2011.

AEC 2011, Current federal electoral divisions, AEC, Canberra, <<http://www.aec.gov.au/profiles/index.htm>>, last viewed 10 May 2011.

Louth J, and Hill L, 2005 Compulsory Voting: Turnout with and without it , Australian Review of Public Affairs, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 25-37.

Young S, and Hill L, 2009, Uncounted votes: informal voting in the house of representatives as a marker of political exclusion in Australia, The Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 55, Issue 1, pages 64-79.